



Weekly News Review – 19 May 2017

[Access to medical facilities](#) and supplies, trained doctors and [midwives](#), [changes in attitude](#) and [stigma](#), [reaching people](#) with [the right information](#), [evolved government policy](#), leveraged [technological innovation](#) – these are some of the most important factors in providing [family planning](#) and reproductive health services. But in the end, it all comes down to money, and on that front there was more challenging news emanating from Washington this week.

The Trump “global gag order” was extended far beyond previous Republican administrations to [encompass all foreign assistance](#) -- \$8.8 billion – and will affect integrated health services around the world, including the fight against [HIV/AIDS](#), Zika and [“everything from measles malaria”](#). [Unveiled during “Women’s Health Week”](#), the order will be felt most acutely in the quest to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity, and according to many NGOs [“women and children will die”](#) as a direct result.

The upcoming [2017 London Summit on Family Planning](#) will address some of the issues that the shortfall will exacerbate, always with an eye on the Sustainable Development Goal of universal access to sexual and reproductive health by 2030. The scope of the global problem can be seen in WHO statistics, which show [“Pregnancy problems are leading global killer of females aged 15 to 19”](#)

Speaking of the WHO, this week marks the World Health Assembly in Geneva, with the body deliberating on [the selection of a new director-general](#), as well as [a wide range of other issues](#), including health emergency preparedness and drug safety.

Last week was Mother’s Day in many countries, and one article noted that [fifty-nine percent of the women who choose abortion already have one or more children.](#), so in addition to celebrating all that mothers do, it is also a day to think of [“mothers without choices](#) — mothers for whom just one more birth could ruin their health, their ability to care for the children they already have and, potentially, their family’s financial viability.”

A few notes on technology: a [“smart bangle”](#) being introduced in South Asia “alerts pregnant women to toxic fumes and issues audio tips”; researchers are looking at [plant chemicals](#) to find new contraceptives; and an insight into how [Even the Rainforest Is Better Off When Women Have Reproductive Healthcare](#).

The governments in [Gambia](#) and [Namibia](#) are prioritizing family planning. In Nigeria Nollywood star [Jim lyke](#) is leading a campaign to reduce maternal mortality, and [MTV](#) is getting the word out in South Africa.

Finally, a shout-out to our University of Michigan School of Nursing colleague Jody Lori who was involved in the building of [Zambia’s first maternity waiting home](#).

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